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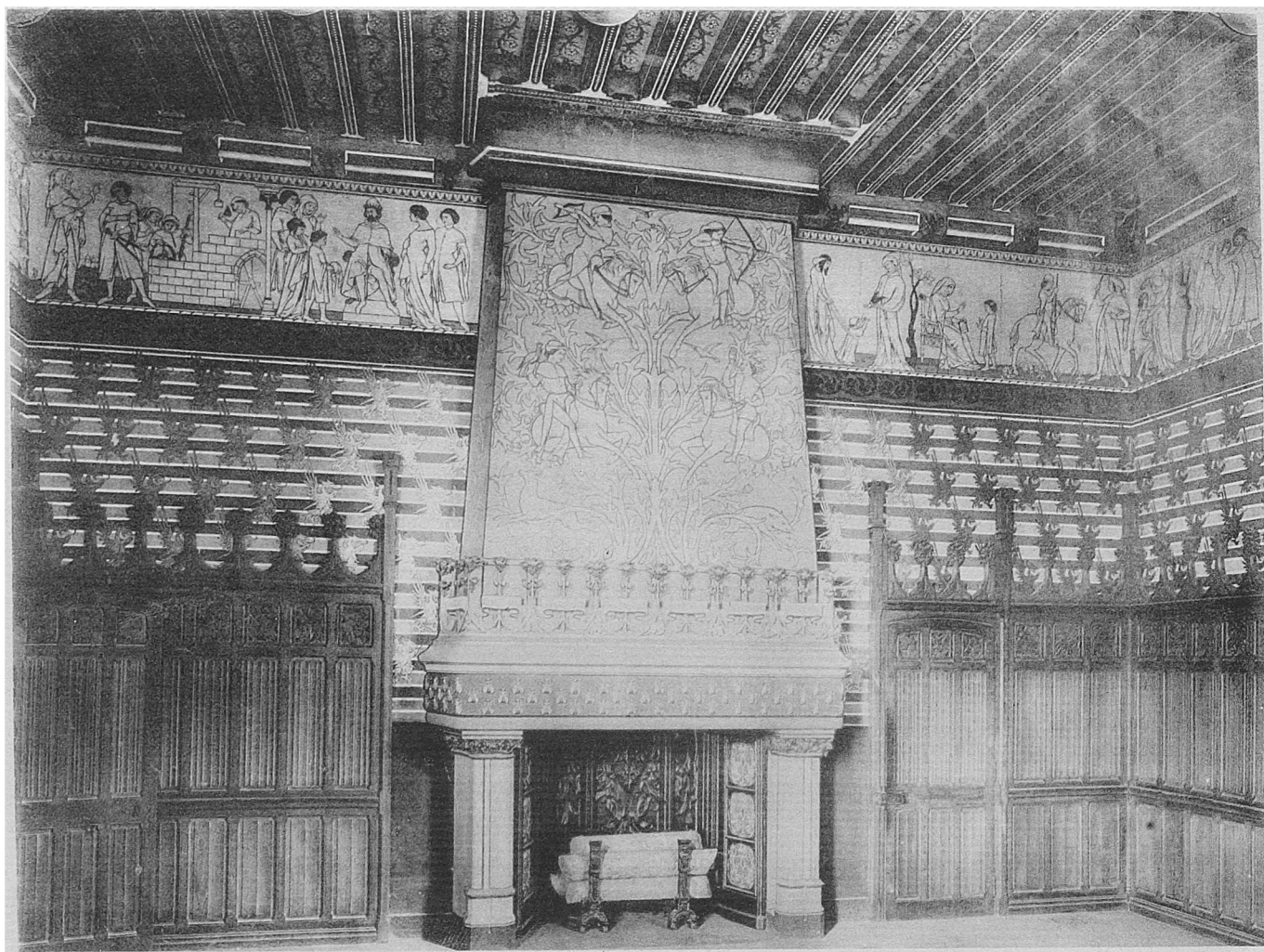
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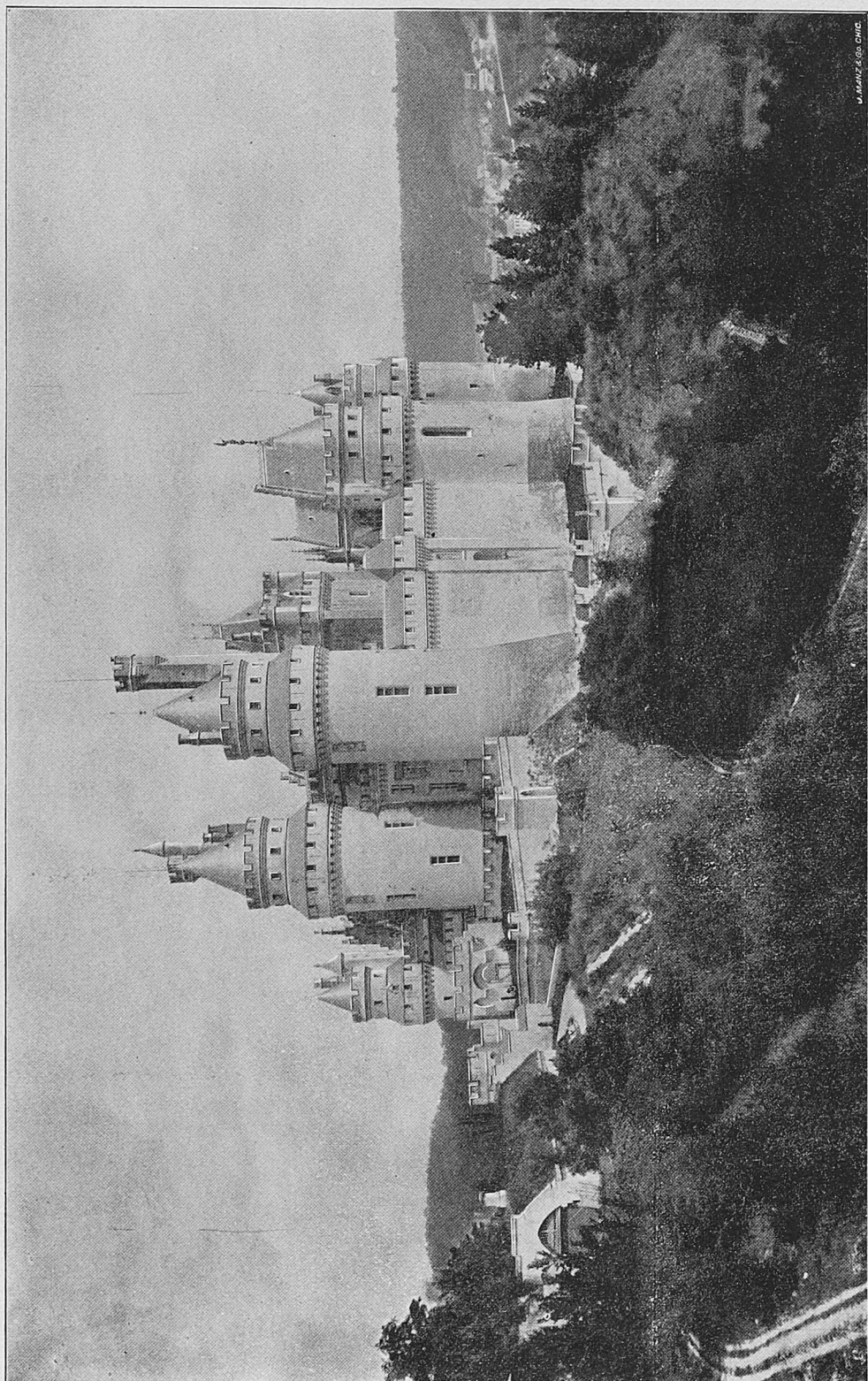
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PIERREFONDS

Built to protect and support royalty, Pierrefonds was destroyed because she menaced it, to be rebuilt when the time had passed that a French chateau could either support or menace the nation.

Sixty miles to the northwest of Paris lies this massive and charming structure. You leave Paris on a day in early fall; one of those days so common in France, when the mild sunshine is obscured by clouds which simply increase the purple haze lying thick over forest and plain, to be followed by the sunlight—weather as capricious as that of April; never sad, always charming. France is never sad; no matter what the circumstance, her



climate, as her people, is always joyous. Through the fortification, past the church of Saint-Denis, where lie buried the kings and queens of France; into the forest of Chantilly; through the town of that name which is celebrated as the residence of the Condés; onward to Senlis with its Gallo-Roman fortifications, its cathedral and three or four Gothic churches of the thirteenth century; into Compiègne which was once a favorite residence of the monarchs of France, and where Joan of Arc was taken prisoner; through the beautiful and celebrated forest of Compiègne to Pierrefonds. Enough already for months of happiness and study.

You step to the platform and draw a deep breath of delight. To the left, outlined against the sky, is the chateau with its eight tall towers and massive walls; at its foot and extending well to the right the village of stone, thatched-roof cottages which have covered generation after generation of mild-eyed French peasants; in front the lake reflecting the chateau and the capricious sky. Take the road which winds to the left past the lake, through the cottages, and you are no longer in the nineteenth century; you are living in the fourteenth or fifteenth. You hear the clang of armor. The peasants are no longer free, but the bondsmen of the feudal seigneur who keeps state in the towering castle above. Upwards through the outer gate and into the lists and half way round the chateau you go, your mind full of the past. You mount to the top of the outer wall, looking far below, to the tops of the picturesque cottages and into the gardens which lie at their rear. All the life of the village is open to you. You glance out over the plain. Away back in the fifteenth century, in which you now are, you see winding out of the forest towards the chateau a great procession; banners flying, chargers stepping proudly, the sunlight flashing from many a brightly polished armor, rich garments, embroidered housings—all these are a part of this peaceful pageant, for the King of France is coming to visit the castle. The peasants, open-eyed and mild as now, gaze

PIERREFONDS

"Among the arts architecture is certainly the most nearly related to the instincts, ideas, manners, progress and needs of a people. It is, therefore, difficult to understand the direction it has taken, and the results attained, if the tendencies and genius of the people among whom it has developed are not known."
Viollet-le-Duc

curiously on the brilliant scene. Do none of them ever dream that all this splendor is the result of their toil? Within the castle all is bustle, for the last preparations are being hurried along; and through the openings in the high walls peer the bright eyes of charming and graceful women, sisters to the over-burdened peasant who dwells below.

But the sunshine passes. Another procession comes over the plain. There is bustle still in the chateau, but this bustle is of war; war which means not only the possession of the castle but of the kingdom of France. The Duke of Burgundy has sent his lieutenant and a large force to besiege this stronghold and they come ready to sit down before it for months. An army of soldiers, and an army of artisans as well, for trees must be felled and the ponderous machinery of war built, the walls sapped and scaling ladders provided. It is a hand-to-hand conflict which they hope to wage. The frightened peasantry rush to the chateau for protection. If the strong walls could only protect them all! But Pierrefonds was not built to protect a few miserable serfs. It was placed there to keep the duke from gaining the throne. The peasants would only eat the provisions which may be necessary to the garrison; they would hinder the free movement of the soldiers. So they remain without to bear the brunt of the cruel warfare of nearly five hundred years ago. The chateau is strong, the siege is a failure, though the structure is grievously hurt.

With a sigh you turn from the ramparts and slowly move around the great building, past the immense towers, eight of them, each named for a famous warrior: Hector, David, Alexander, Joshua, Caesar, Charlemagne, Arthur and Godfrey of Bouillon. What an inspiration to the captains who commanded these strongholds! For each tower was practically an independent fortress, commanded by a trusted vassal of the seigneur. They were connected by narrow steps and paths along the walls, as were all the parts of the fortress.



It was a brave man who in time of war followed the path you are treading now. You glance upward at the towers and connecting walls on your left and think of the showers of stone missiles which have fallen through the machicolations, of the hot lead, boiling oil and arrows which have been sent from those heights. You look to the right. The massive exterior wall shuts out all escape in that direction. The old warrior who walked the lists of Pierrefonds took his life in his hand and had very little chance of reaching the goal before him, the entrance to the chateau. Up into the outer courtyard, through a well defended outer gate, he had to go. This gained he crossed the courtyard, not peacefully as you are, but fighting every step; then came what is known as the gutter gate, a fortified doorway which stands in front of a bridge crossing the first dry ditch. Then across the terrace to the inner gate, which is also strongly fortified and stands in front of a second dry ditch, behind which, at last, is the entrance to the castle proper, with its draw-bridge, portcullis, herse and machicolations, through which a veritable shower of missiles descended on the head of the assailant. Small wonder that Pierrefonds stood three regular sieges without being taken. Brute force alone never conquered this stronghold. It was only when the mind of man had given the world gunpowder that the fortress fell, and then not when besieged. Richelieu felt that the monarchy could never be safe with a chateau such as this in the land, in which the enemies of the government could shelter themselves. Then powder was placed under its great towers and they were shattered.

It stood thus for two hundred and fifty years, a sad reminder of a glorious and cruel past; but even in its desolation it was imposing, and during the reign of Napoleon III its restoration was begun because a woman, the Empress of France, felt an interest in its stirring history and sad over its desolation. The empire fell, the republic took its place; but under the master hand of Viollet-le-Duc the work of restoration went on.

PIERREFONDS

"It (French architecture during the middle ages) is so intimately connected with our history, with the intellectual conquests of our country, with our national character whose principal traits it reproduces, that it is hard to understand why it is not better known and appreciated, and why its study is not prescribed in our schools in connection with that of our history."

Viollet-le-Duc



THE WINGED BULL



THE GRIFFIN.

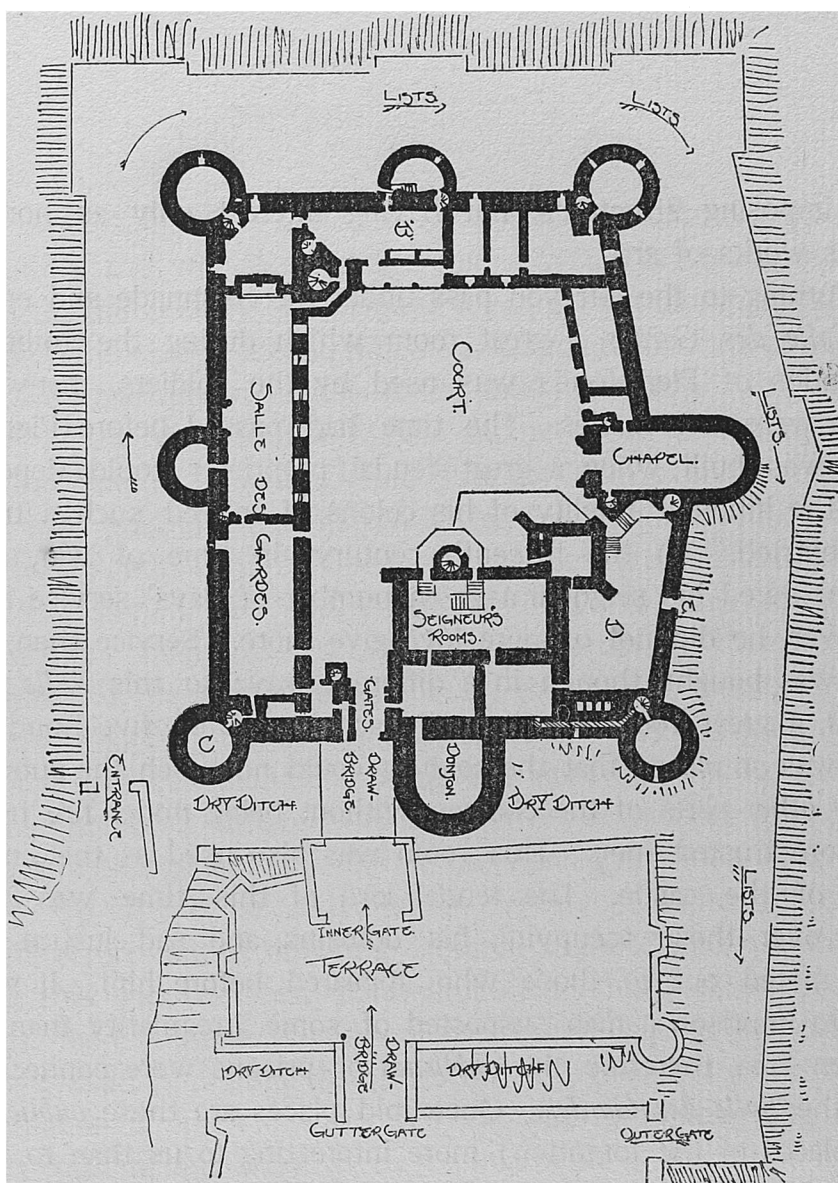
PIERREFONDS Fully a million of dollars, one-third of which was supplied by Napoleon, were expended in this work. To-day the old chateau stands in all its mediæval glory, perfect in every detail.

You pass the gate, enter the inner court and what a wealth of beauty! The walls are as massive as on the outside, but are relieved and decorated by the wonderful carving of the Gothic period. There stands the grand staircase which leads to the apartments of the knights; to the left the chapel with its imposing entrance and beautiful rose window; to the right the colonnade, back of which is the *Salle des Gardes*. Not the least beautiful feature is the stairway which leads to the apartments of the seigneur with the bow window above, four stories high. What a wealth of animal life peeps from every corner and crevice. Even the water spout is ornamented with an immense lizard six feet long. There are no shams in this architecture. Nothing is built for mere show. All has a direct purpose, and the result is an architecture which the world's history has never excelled, either in beauty or originality of conception.

There are three kinds of chateaux in France. Those built by the Normans in the northwest were military structures, built not only to protect the inhabitants but to hold the territory, for the Norman fought daily for every inch of territory he had wrested from the French. These chateaux were hospitable. They were large enough to hold the inhabitants of the surrounding village. At the first note of war the inhabitants rushed to them, to leave only after the danger had passed. In the center of France the military chateau was built to protect one feudal lord from another. Neighbors in those days seemed to live only to quarrel, and they did not build their castles with particular thought of the peasant whose toil supported them. He could fare as best he might if only the seigneur and his immediate supporters were safe. Such was Pierrefonds. But the time for the military chateau passed and the social chateau was built in its stead. These cover the soil of France to-day; beau-



THE STATUE OF
THE DUKE



NOTES

Over the *Salle des Gardes* was the banquet hall, which extended the full length of that side of the chateau.

B On the first floor were the kitchen and offices. The rooms above were used by the knights.

The Seigneur's apartments occupied the entire suite of rooms back of the donjon.

D Was a court which was only used when provisions were taken into the chateau. These were taken in through a gate (*E*) which was about fifteen feet above the lists outside. At such times an inclined plane was let down into the lists and the provisions hoisted by windlasses. This arrangement had two purposes: To introduce the immense store of provisions into the chateau without interfering with the maneuvers of the soldiers in the large court; and to prevent spies from being carried in wagons into the courtyard. This arrangement was very curious and merits a long description.

C Is the oubliettes.

The arrows indicate the roadway which leads from the village, around the chateau, to the gates.

PIERREFONDS

"There is no
human work which
does not contain in germ
form the principle of
its own
dissolution."
Viollet-le-Duc

tiful, imposing structures, but having interest only as homes and as works of art.

Turning to the left you pass under the colonnade and enter the *Salle des Gardes*, a great room which during the military occupation of Pierrefonds was used by the soldiers, many of whom were mercenaries. The time had passed before Pierrefonds was built when a great feudal proprietor could depend upon the inherent fidelity of his colons, if indeed such a time ever existed. In the fifteenth century, in time of war, the peasant owed his seigneur a given number of days' service and this over, he did not of pure love give more. Service then, as now, was bought, though in a different way; so this *Salle des Gardes*, a great room which easily accommodated five hundred men, was so placed that the soldiers could not reach the outside or the other parts of the chateau without being under fire from the more trusted men. This room was also used as the court room of the castle. The feudal lord of this time was the judge over those occupying his domains, and sad justice he often meted out to those who appeared before him. It was safer to imprison a man suspected of some irregularity than to set him free, therefore the *oubliettes* or prisons were connected with the *Salle des Gardes*. Queer old places are these *oubliettes* (the places of the forgotten), more interesting to us than to the man who was dropped into them. That at Pierrefonds was reached through a round opening in the floor, a sort of cistern top. It was two stories deep, the lower one being reached through a hole in the floor of the upper, and the man who was lodged in either had slight chance of being resurrected.

The *Salle des Gardes* is now used as a museum, in which are stored the fragments of carving which remain from the original structure, and from which the architect reconstructed the building. Viollet-le-Duc was a pupil of the *Ecole des Beaux Arts* at Paris, a school which has never given attention to any other architecture than the Classic and the Renaissance. While there



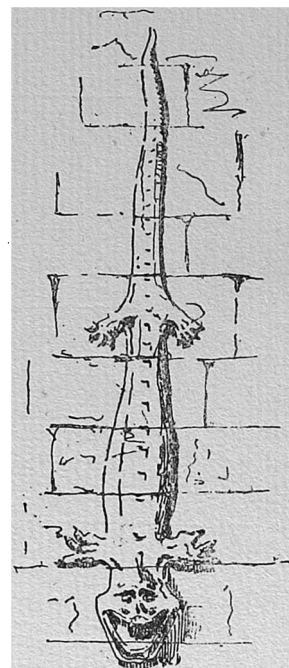
he became much interested in Gothic architecture, the most beautiful and wonderful specimens of which are to be found in France, the country which gave it birth. But to express admiration of the Gothic meant ridicule and neglect, and the young man pursued the regular course at the *Ecole*, spending two years in Italy in the study of the Classic and returning to France to find his admiration for the Gothic stronger than ever. Thenceforth his time was given to its study and he became the best known authority not only on mediæval architecture, but on the life of that period. He was employed by the French government to restore many of its old structures, among them, the cathedrals of Paris, Amiens and Laon, the Abbey Church of Saint-Denis, Vezelay and Carcassonne, and many old chateaux, one of which was Pierrefonds. During the siege of Paris he gave valuable assistance through his consummate knowledge of engineering and the general scheme of the Paris Exposition of 1878 was his. To all this he added about twenty standard volumes on architecture and at one time lectured in the *Ecole des Beaux Arts*. But this was the least successful of all his various undertakings, for the students would hear nothing of Gothic architecture and hissed him from the platform. The wonderful architectural collection in the Trocadero at Paris was his conception, and in fact most of the work in connection with it was done by him. In a word, he was one of the most prodigious, conscientious and intelligent workers the world has ever known and France owes the careful preservation of many noble structures to him.

Leaving the *Salle des Gardes*, you ascend a staircase and after traversing a corridor enter the great banqueting hall which extends the full length of that side of the chateau. To-day the huge fireplace, the high windows, the many cushioned seats and the beautiful stained glass relieve its bareness, but we must again go back into the past to give life to this stately hall. At one end is a raised dais covered with rich tapestries. The walls are also hung with these beautiful products of the labor of the

PIERREFONDS

"An official art
is no art; it is a formula.
Art disappears with
the responsibility
of the artist."

Viollet-le-Duc



PIERREFONDS

*There is a
large collection of needle-work
in the Cluny Museum.
This was a part
of the life in the chateaux
during the mediæval
period.*

ladies of the chateau, needlework which gives a truthful and graphic account of the life of the time.

On the dais sit the great personages who are in the chateau. At regular intervals great hooks are fastened to the wall; on them are hung many coats of mail. A stately and noble figure enters the hall—a knight of that mysterious and far away time. From head to foot he is covered with glittering mail. These are troublous times; no one must have his armor out of reach, even on a festive occasion. This mail is taken off and hung against the wall in company with many others and the noble knight bows low over the hand of a fair lady. Outside the castle walls the frightened peasant shivers over his scanty fire. But hark! A call to arms! The stately knights don their armor, rush to the walls and the *fete* is over; war takes its place.

The history of this chateau would fill a volume. More than a thousand years ago one of the gloomy castles of the old French barons occupied the extremity of the escarpment where Pierrefonds now stands. In fact the present chateau stands over the lower foundations and a crypt of the original structure. In 1390, Louis, Duke of Orleans, brother of Charles VI, built this noble structure to hold the territory against the Duke of Burgundy. During all this wild time Pierrefonds was the center of mad war, and, in truth, peace never reigned here. The history of the castle is the history of France. In every stirring event it seems to have had a part.

But built as it was for war, the artistic was not forgotten. As we roam over the vast establishment, we find delicate stone traceries, beautiful wood carving, stained glass, and frescoed walls and ceilings. Every molding is traced by the hand of an artist. But there is nothing placed there simply as decoration; every part fills some useful purpose and the eye of the builder simply seized upon the artistic possibilities of utilitarian features.

EMILY G. GIBSON

